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# SONNETS

BY

“LUCILLA”



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v. 2

SECOND SERIES

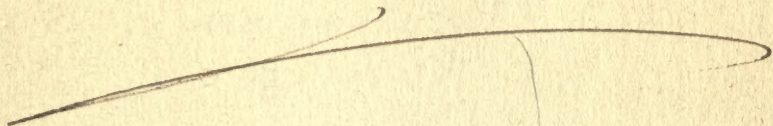
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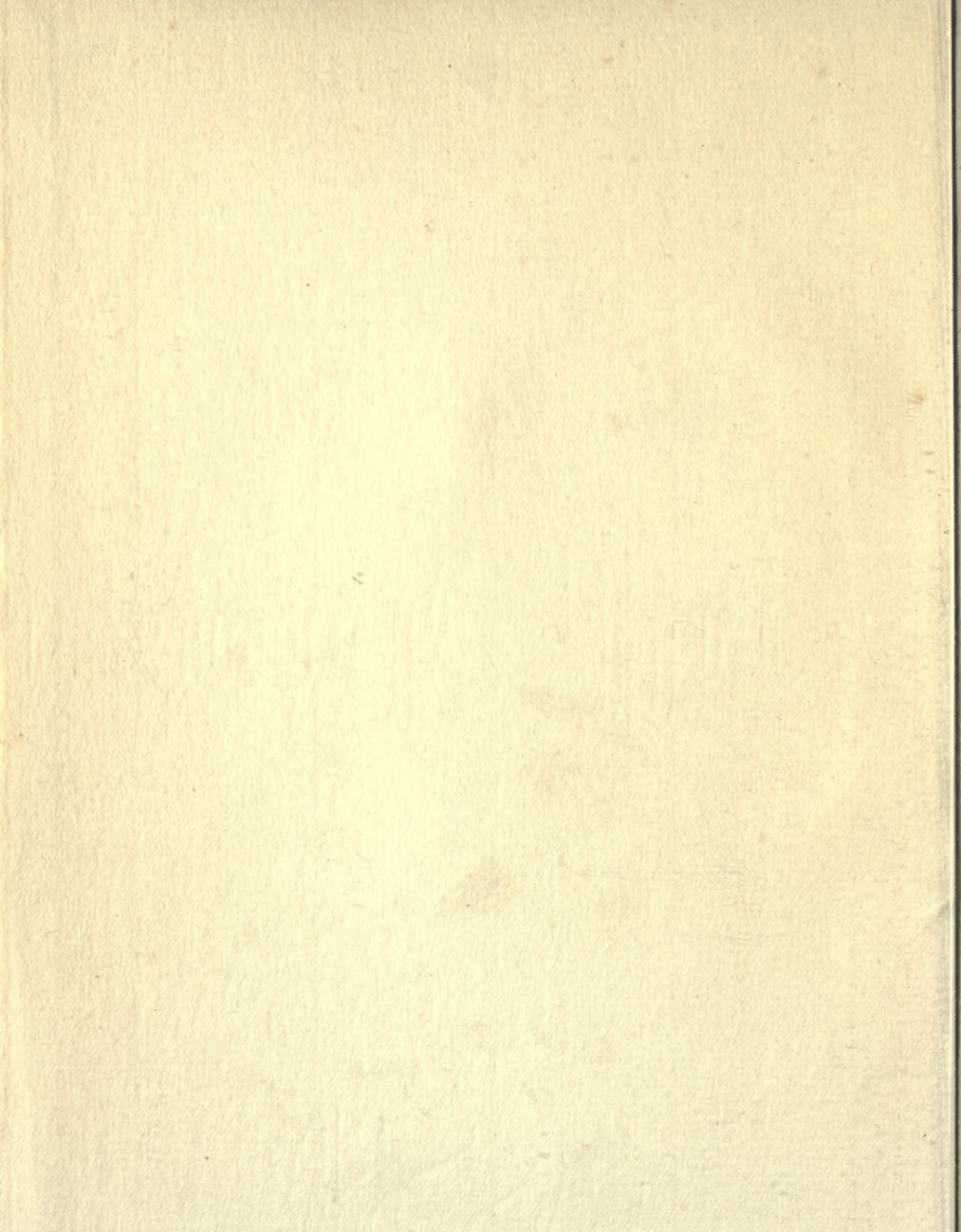


To Francis Cornhill

from

Grace To Homochie







SONNETS

BY

"LUCILLA"

SECOND SERIES



SONNETS

BY

ALFRED

THE



# SONNETS

BY

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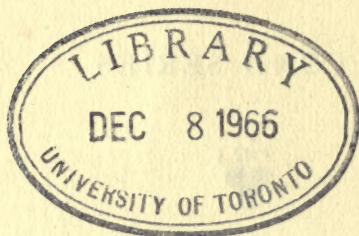


LONDON

ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET

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## TO WINIFRED

*Haply some strangers, but of my own Kin  
Not one has smiled upon my muse as thou  
Of the bright copper hair and perfect brow,  
And if thus late some laurels I should win  
To bide my head's long-tarnished auburn in  
And all its vain regrets—take them! I vow  
But for thy praise their leaves had died ere now,—  
To thee more precious than their wreath's but thin!*

*We bear one name, from one same stream of blood  
That in our veins flows. Such are common ties,—  
Though dear to each our honoured ancestry:  
We both see Art and Nature with like eyes  
And with fine palates relish Fancy's food;—  
With bonds like these, what bonds of blood can vie!*

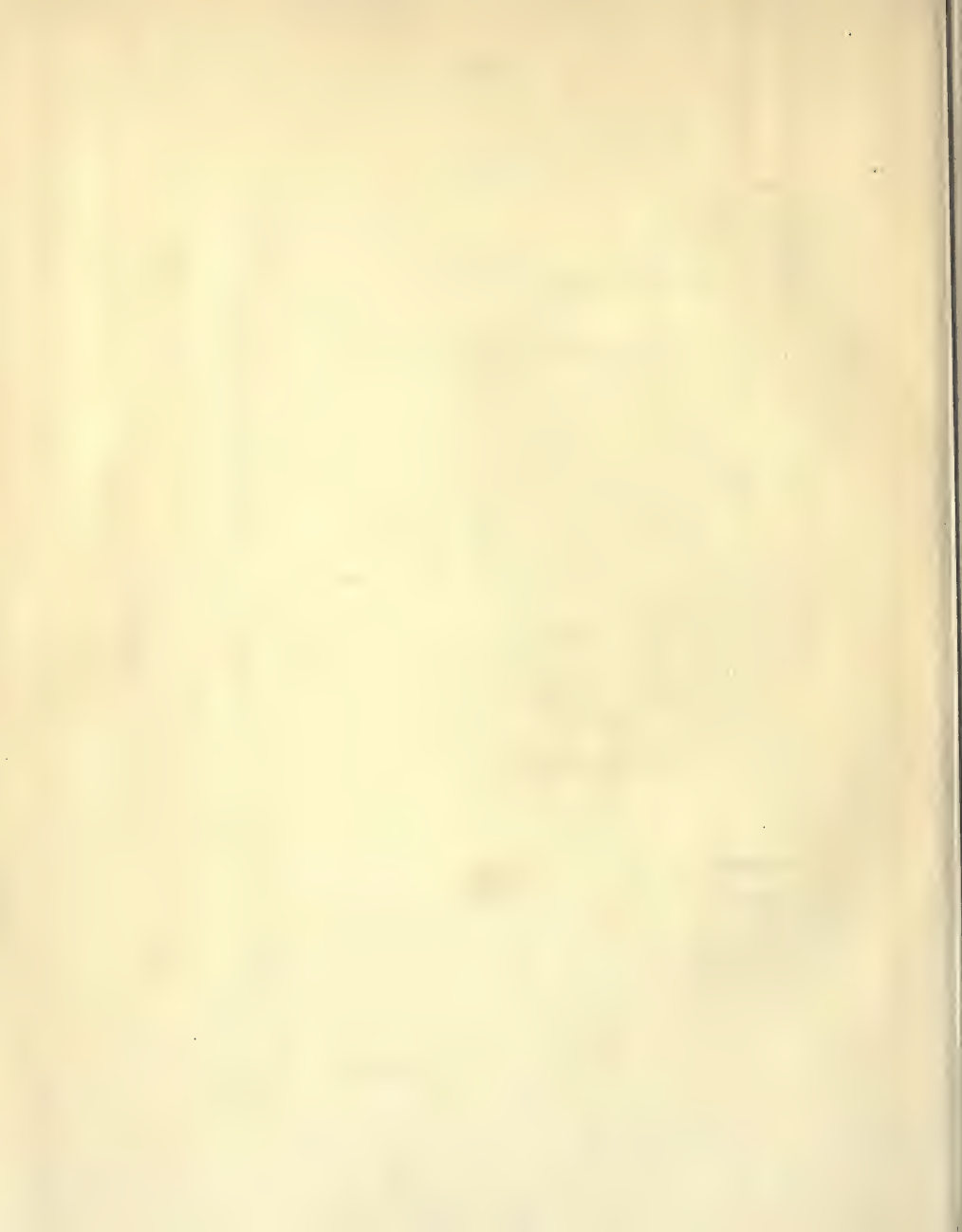
### NOTE

THE following Sonnets are  
now printed for the first time.



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## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

WHO would not seek this forest sanctuary  
Of sylvan secrecy inviolable,  
Whose untimed hours the creeping shadows tell,  
Where shy beasts roam, and the clear brook brawls by;  
And list the woodland Duke's philosophy,  
And Jacques' musings, with no surly bell  
To start seclusion,—who'd not love to dwell  
Unroofed in exile, under Arden's sky?

Forest of Fancy and the Soul's Content !  
For ever crowned with June's eternal prime,  
And decked in fairest foliage fresh unfurled,  
Still—lured by thy sweet dreamy banishment—  
Choice spirits shall fly to thee, and “fleet the time  
Carelessly, as they did in the golden world !”

## “ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA”

THIS is love's burning high meridian,  
With life's horizon hid in shimmering haze,  
Love's fiery summer-solstice whose fierce blaze  
Till eve holds on, at earliest that began;  
This is the love that fear's not stronger than,  
And ill-stars cannot move, nor fate amaze,  
Whose dauntless beams glow in the dying gaze  
Of the Antony-doting rare Egyptian!

Self-murder seems in her most fit a Queen,  
And rich as deep midsummer somnolences,  
For so she gained, for her lost empery,  
By one last delicate wile, Death's wide demesne!  
Who sought out infinite easy ways to die,  
Among her sumptuous indolent sorceries!



## “A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM”

WHAT festal fare is this for Fancy’s food!  
Of tiny elves and Oberon in a teen  
For one boy-page, and Nature’s fit of spleen,  
And ass-nowled Bottom by Titania wooed,  
And the coarse rustics’ ill-conned interlude,  
Played before Theseus and his amazon-Queen,  
And frantic lovers Puck-led through the scene;—  
How all falls aptly in this feverish mood!

Yet looks mere lunacy by morning-light,  
When Reason’s sober sway the mind recovers  
From strong delusion by its piercing beam;  
And the mad medley—of all sorts of lovers,  
Faeries and clowns—of this Midsummer Night  
Proves but the “fierce vexation of a dream!”

## “THE TEMPEST”

THESE scenes are solemn, for all magic's shows  
And sweet sounds, like gray days of harvesting,  
When the heaped wains creak home, and no birds sing,  
And goodly summer on his journey goes;  
And though—as Day's pyre sudden deeper glows  
From some last faggot hands invisible fling—  
Those world-known lines mount up on eagles' wing,  
Sadly they 're marked, as music at its close;

Their sumptuous splendour leaves the soul astound,—  
For now the wizard's pageant has gone by,  
And lordly Prospero leaves his “full-poor cell,”  
And frees his spritely servant Ariel,  
His peerless art—beyond all plummet's sound—  
Must sink,—to the end of all eternity!

TO DR. JOHNSON AS SHAKESPEARE'S  
COMMENTATOR

This is one of our author's most amusing plays.

*S. Johnson. On Coriolanus.*

THE ass's nowl not Bottom more became,  
New-foundered in the world of fantasy,  
Than in my poor thoughts 'twould look well on thee,  
Fond Bozzy's demi-god, of blustering fame!—  
Mock-Jove! dispensing paltry praise or blame  
On Shakespeare's genius! Thou but fit to be  
A lexicon-compiler, how should he  
Thy ponderous mind with fire from Heaven inflame?

For while I quailed yet at the noble rage  
Of Caius Marcius, when he stands at bay,  
Thy senseless gloze by ill-hap caught my sight:  
Flat profanation of this fulminant play  
With such sot's words didst thou insult the page;—  
That with thy darkness durst affront his light!



## ON THE FAME OF SHAKESPEARE

WHO marked some single drops at first that fell  
On the dry soil—they dashed but as the dew—  
Grow to a fall of drenching rain, whence grew  
A mantling flood, that hid field, vale and dell?  
Or in the sea, saw one weak wave rebel  
At the dead calm, thence after it that drew  
The tide's whole host, like a mad mutinous crew,  
To howl and hiss like fiends new-loosed from Hell?

So in men's mouths more frequent grew his name,—  
A sign that genius yet un-wreathed bewrays,  
Until the blast of all their breath became  
A living tempest of tumultuous praise,  
The glorious golden voice of deathless fame,  
Like to the trumpet that the Dead shall raise!

## ELIJAH AND ELISHA

**A**LL day Elisha to Elijah clave,—  
Who knew he must be taken from his head,  
Though not to mingle with the myriad dead,  
For none for him should need to dig a grave;  
And horses fetched him and to Heaven he drave,  
Then those who thought him haply spirited  
To some high mountain, to Elisha said:—  
“Send; lest he’s cast where some his life might save:”

But he said: “Send not” who would not profane  
His end, no mortal illness made expire,  
But by a whirl-wind who was rapt away;  
Whose dust nor urn nor sepulchre contain,  
But whom God took, in flame and wind and fire;—  
And who no more was seen, hence from that day!

## BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

**B**ELSHAZZAR King of Babylon made a feast  
To prince and lord and wife and concubine,  
And whiles before them all he proved the wine,  
His heart was puffed-up with pride's bitter yeast;  
And he bade fetch—to have the pomp increast—  
The sacred vessels meant for use divine  
And they drank; and praised gods of gold made fine  
And praised not Him in whom live great'st and least:

Till fingers of a hand came forth to trace  
The writing whose dire import Daniel told,  
And dull fear fell on all that gay-clad crowd;—  
But none recordeth with how good a grace  
Were given to him the gifts the King had vowed,  
The scarlet clothing and the chain of gold!



## MOUNT CARMEL

AND on Mount Carmel of the muses too,  
Let Him be God who answers them by fire!—  
For poesy's false prophets till they tire  
May call their gods and for their aid may sue,  
May lay the faggots in their order due  
And shout from earliest Dawn till Eve expire;  
Heaven's spark shall not be had at their desire,  
Because they serve false gods and not the True:

But haply one upon the Mount alone  
Shall make of song some whole heart's-sacrifice,  
And cry aloud upon the Heavenly Name;  
And all his God for the True God shall own,  
For though the altar first be flooded thrice,  
His offering shall ascend in smoke and flame!

## ON WAGNER'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

THIS book will move those moody fiends to glee,  
Who in men's minds haunt ditch and cave and den,  
—Mole-eyed who grudge to eagle-visions their ken—  
To know this god to whom hordes bow the knee,  
Whose magic swayed the tides of music's sea,  
Was yet most weak and despicable of men ;  
Whose human heart was a foul stagnant fen  
Of loathly self-love and malignity.

But those bright angels of our better part  
Will rather weep, that one so great so erred  
In sordid ways of mean and sensual vice,  
And but remember his most heavenly art,—  
As we pass pitifully some dead putrid bird,  
Whose song was as the songs of Paradise !

## THE ODYSSEY

THIS oft-read story never can grow stale  
Of that most wily wise Adventurer  
Who, mid the ocean-waves, ill-fates made err,  
Till he had suffered woes innumerable,  
Who by his rare wits made the Cyclops rail,  
And with the Dead who went down to confer,  
And whom Calypso loved and kept with her;—  
Is aught so fresh as this most ancient tale?

And he who in its pages reads once more  
Some kindred joy feels, that his heart hath felt  
Who breathes the brine, and sees the ships go free,  
—Who inland a long space ere-while hath dwelt—  
When some day he revisits the sea-shore  
And finds the old same witchery of the Sea!



## TWO PICTURES FROM "PÊCHEUR D'ISLANDE"

A PALE sun on the lone Icelandic sea,  
And brown sails of the "Marie's" stalwart mast,  
And two men side by side their lines that cast  
Who catch the shining cod continuously,  
Chanting the while some brave old Breton glee  
To help the hours, that heavily lag by  
As in some primal world, to bring at last  
The day of home-return to Brittany!—

A moss-grown cottage on the gray sea's verge,  
Whose ice-like little panes loud tempests rap  
Unheeded, or half blind with flying foam;—  
Where—in the roaring of the ruthless surge—  
"Gaud" of the fair face in her Breton cap  
Watches in vain to welcome "Gaos" home!

## ON READING "CHANTECLER"

O H! may I never see this on the stage!  
More than I would "A Midsummer Night's  
Dream"

To have for me thenceforth made cheap the gleam  
Of golden fancy, that enchants thy page,—  
Champion of the old world! that on our age  
Pour'st meet derision,—in which fools esteem  
All that's far-fetched, incongruous and extreme,  
Bit by its restless and globe-gadding rage:

For Rostand! "Chantecler" the Soul of thee,  
Enamoured of sweet quiet traditional things;  
Do not (as he once) thy song's note bewail!  
Not his delights more darkling flower and tree  
Than thine our souls with its fresh bubbling springs,—  
Wish not to change it with some nightingale!

## ON LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS'S SONNETS

THESE poems whereto may I liken them,  
And wherewith may their beauty find compare?—  
To mild dark nights of June whose dew-washed air  
Starred jasmine scents and Heaven's own stars begem?  
Or broad smooth streams, whose strong tide nought may  
stem,  
With full unbarriered flow that onward fare,  
Or brief October suns most rich and rare,  
Or halcyon seas that skies of gold in-hem?

Wherewith I know not; only this I know,—  
That of each thought athirst as I drink deep,  
From these few cups of song, filled to the brim,  
—Poignant with anguish, or with love aglow,  
Or lit with scorn—my spirit's vision grows dim,  
And with their passionate words my soul could weep!



## ON THE SONNET TO SLEEP BY THE SAME

(“THE CITY OF THE SOUL”)

ALL others in their laud of sleep have lied  
Of poets, thou pleadest with her as she is:—  
In whose dim house most hated memories  
Await us where we cannot flee or hide,  
Whose baleful presence needs we must abide.  
And if as some feign, with fallacious bliss  
Her dreams delude us, what fool's reason's this  
To have the flagrant sorceress deified?—

Nor yet awaking is the mind set free  
From her strange power! On a desolate shore  
Yet dark, she leaves us, stung by vague distress,  
And sick with qualms from that unquiet sea  
Of ill-truths, travestied; to endure once more,  
The cold and dreadful dawn of consciousness!

TO CHARLES LAMB

THAT gruff sage who made life as grim as Hell  
To his "dear Goody" spake in scorn of thee,—  
Sweet christian soul, one of no mean degree  
Among the saints with whom now thou dost dwell  
—Pardoned that fault in thee so pardonable!—  
All of thy memory is most dear to me  
And thy rare prose I love that rambles free,  
And where may wend no reader can foretell!

How tender wast thou to thy Lear white-haired  
And wandering, and to thy poor Proserpine  
—To madness pledged!—Their griefs were as thine  
own!  
For them how gladly were thine earnings spared,  
And goldener hours! No friend's so loved unknown!—  
Gentle and generous, what a heart was thine!

## AT THE PLANTING OF AN OAK

SOME prayer baptismal should be said for thee,  
Now in this soil placed for thy whole life long!  
That thou mayst grow of stately form and strong,  
And be at last a mighty forest-tree!—  
Then through thy dense leaves but few stars shall see,  
And at thy base shall dappled shadows throng;—  
Then may great storms wreak on thee no great wrong,  
Till bald with many centuries first thou be!

And while we plant thee, as some solemn rite,  
Our dumb thoughts needs must weigh th' indifference,  
Of men's brief lives with all the hours that Time  
Shall slowly pace through, ere thou reach thy prime,  
When 'neath thy boughs—six hundred summers hence—  
Shepherds shall seek thy shade at summer's height!

## TO AUTUMN

O AUTUMN hear! Ere with myself go by  
That soul of thee that lived in my soul's gaze  
Ere in these eyes thy glory death o'er glaze  
Or age dim, hear me, heavenly Deity!  
For I have loved thy golden days that die  
Loved of the gods,—thy brief-lived golden days,  
Thy dag and mist and dew and smoke-blue haze  
And rain-dark soil and rapt seraphic sky,

And thy fresh-furrowed plough and plodding team,  
And the sweet hedgerow songs thy robins sing,  
And thy dead leaves on the green gossamerèd grass,  
And thy tall spectral trees, that droop and dream;—  
And yet more than for primrose-wreathèd Spring  
Have pined for thee, and yearned to see thee pass!



## A REGRET

I LISTENED to some music yesterday  
And—hardly marked then—one most luscious strain  
Now haunts my memory with its rare refrain,  
And to my soul reproachfully I say :—  
“ Why didst thou hearken so luke-warm a way  
What now to hear thou art so feverish-fain?  
But once more couldst thou listen not in vain  
For thy delight should the musicians play!

And if with charming music so it chanced,  
Oh! with life's fuller, sweeter melody,  
Youth, friendship, love, fields, trees, stars, flowers, and  
dew,  
How will it smite thee when I come to die  
If thou must answer that thou hast not danced  
When all life's sweetness says:—‘ I piped to you! ’ ”

## “LA GIOCONDA”

(With acknowledgments to Sir Claude Phillips from whose  
“Art Notes” the idea is taken.)

THAT vanished portrait with the haunting glance  
Himself Da Vinci held to be a thing  
Most precious,—a gift fit to give a king  
And gave his splendid patron King of France.  
For his fair sitter’s beauty to enhance,  
And that rare smile back to her face to bring,  
’Tis said that he had minstrels oft to sing  
And play to her and droll buffoons to dance:

And so the long hours sweetly were beguiled,  
And still she wore that rare look to enthral  
Men’s gaze; nor seemed mere “Mona Lisa,” wife  
Of one Giocondo, but seemed—more than all—  
As Leonardo’s very soul that smiled  
Superbly on this sumptuous scene of life!

## INTERCHANGED RÔLES

SOMETIMES in summer falls a day so chill  
And dark and chary it feels nigh to freeze,  
Despite the foliage of the full-robed trees  
And the month June who plays his part right ill;  
Nor does frost-famed December always fill  
His crabbèd rôle, but oft with balmy breeze  
For his past havoc would the world appease,  
But June's June and December's winter still.

So are there days in life's most heavenly prime  
That weigh on youth's light heart and eager brain,  
—But in one hour their gray may turn to gold—  
And mid-life, that draws near the bitter time  
Of Age, has fair days that of joy are fain,—  
But Youth's Youth and withal, mid-life is old!

## PRESS OPINIONS

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"The Sonnets which are published under the pseudonym of 'Lucilla' are all excellent in the unity of their mood, and in their richly-figured expression of mood. . . . There are moments of exquisite beauty in 'Lucilla's' sonnets; and there is perhaps not one of them that has not some rare charm of phrase."—*Times Literary Supplement*.

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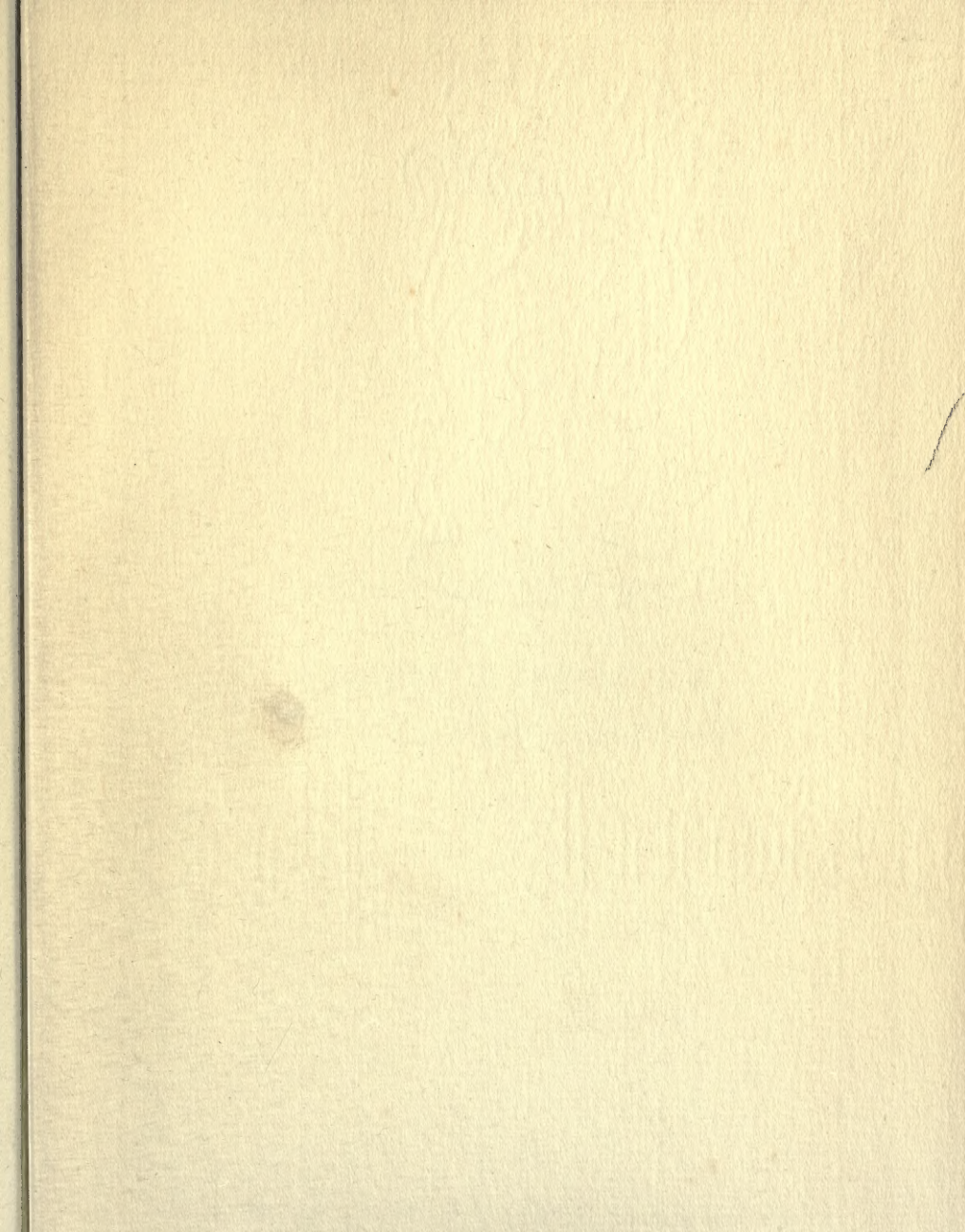
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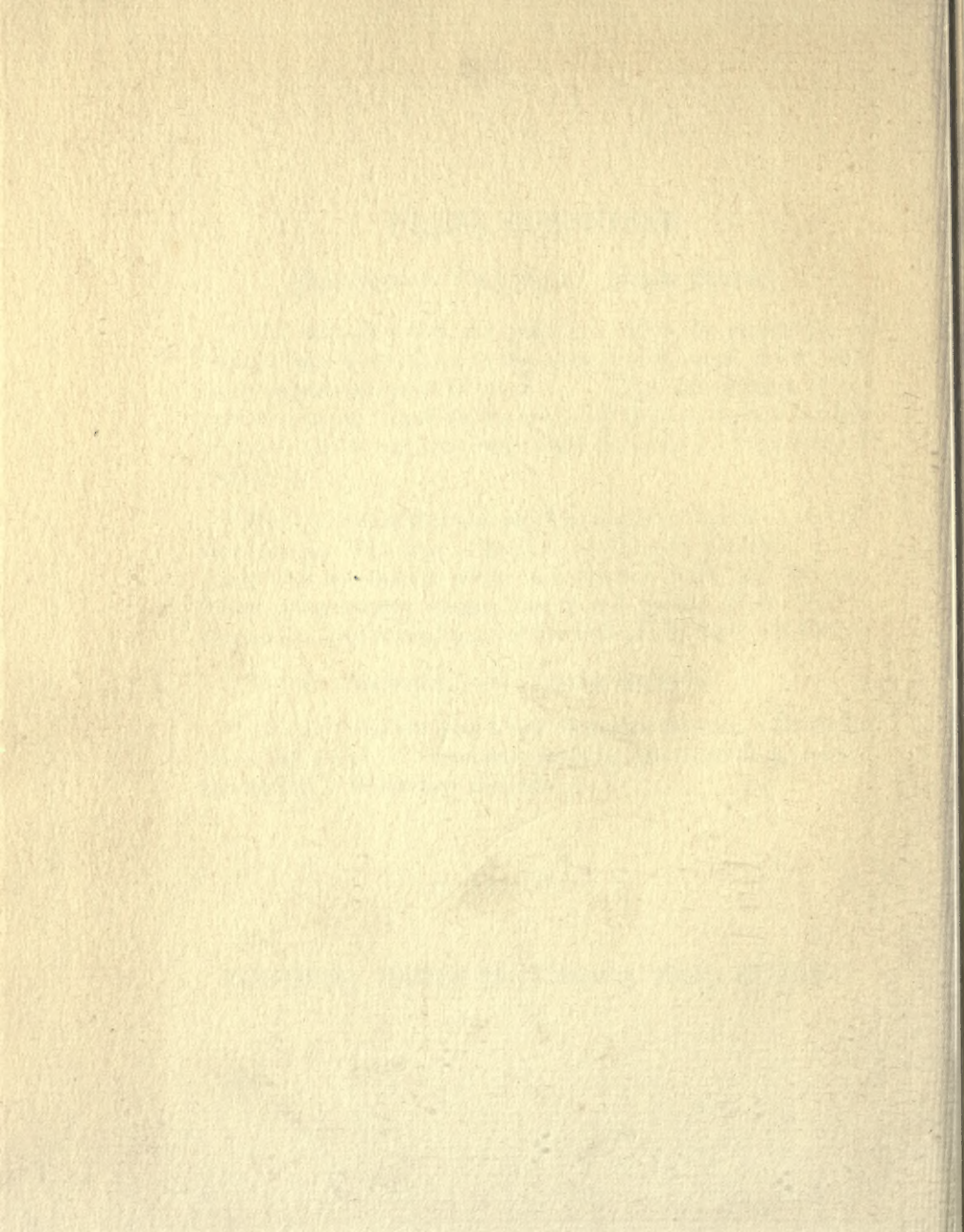
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